Natural Gas. However, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Rosneft on 25.01.2007. As per MoU, Rosneft and ONGC would form two Joint Study Groups (JSG). One for upstream and the other for downstream activities. The JSGs would jointly study the possibilities for mutual projects in exploration, production and marketing as well as other projects related to hydrocarbon industry, including joint bidding for oil and gas stake in Russia, India and third countries. In addition, the two companies also agreed to jointly explore the options for participation in refining and retail marketing projects in India, including integration of other companies in India. In addition, ONGC has signed an MoU with Gazprom on 21.2.2005. MoU with Gazprom envisages studying the prospects of joint participation in oil and gas projects in India, Russia and third countries.

The two MoU's are expected to bring ONGC closer to the two national oil and gas companies of Russia resulting in joint operations and possibly acquisition of further oil and gas properties in Russia and other countries for enhancing India's oil security.'

Promotion of tourism in North-Eastern States

*467 SHRI O.T LEPCHA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the schemes sanctioned by Government to promote tourism in North-Eastern States specially in Sikkim;

(b) the assistance provided by Government to these State Governments during each of the last three years alongwith the amount spent by these State Governments for the purpose; and

(c) the steps taken in that regard during the Ninth Plan and proposed for Tenth Plan?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The schemes formulated by the Ministry of Tourism under which projects are sanctioned for development and promotion of tourism in the country are as follows:—

(i) Product/Infrastructure Development for Destination and Circuits.

(ii) Large Revenue Generating Projects.

(iii) Capacity Building for service providers.

(iv) Fairs & Festivals.

(v) Assistance under information technology.

(vi) Establishment of Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology.

(vii) Promotion and Marketing, of North East through publicity campaign.

All the above schemes are applicable to the North-Eastern States including Sikkim,

(b) The details of Financial Assistance provided to the North-Eastern States during the last three years and the amounts spent as reported by the State Governments, based on the Utilisation Certificates, are as follows:

(Rs. in lakhs)

State/UT	2004-05		2005-06			2006-07			
	Amount Sanctioned	Amount Released	Amount Utilized	Amount Santioned	Amount Released by State Governments	Amount Utilized	Amount Santioned by State Governments	Amount Released	Amount Utilized by State Govern-ments
Assam	97103	753.42	699.25.	2125.00	1706.69	976.88	245339	1813.21	—
Arunachal Pradesh	1041.69	894.60	801.05	2013.56	1620.94	1108 93	1887.80	1497.24	—
Manipur	78.10	77.45	48.45	57.30	47 34	32.18	939.35	647.48	—
Meghalaya	994.98	835.91	804 19	05.00	04.00	400	1435 29	114793	—
Mizoram	1101.37	884.60	798.08	1614.41	1259.59	918.05	2613.38	2040.80	—
Nagaland	2275.69	2115.39	2000.17	1733.97	1494.90	1411.90	2340.32	1862.51	—
Sikkim	655.81	524.33	491.81	2712.89	2174.31	2000.00	2609.42	1647.77	—
Tripura	30.00	24.00	23.19	711.33	569.00	428.11	291.27	96.01	—

****Utilisation Certificates are not due for the year 2006-07.**

(c) Project proposals received from the State Governments during the Ninth and Tenth Plan period were duly examined and approved, depending on the priority and funds available.